

VZCZCXR00142  
OO RUEHDE RUEHROV RUEHTRO  
DE RUEHNR #1655/01 2111205

ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
O 301205Z JUL 09  
FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 0569  
INFO RUCNSOM/SOMALIA COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
RHMFIS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE  
RUZEFAA/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE  
RUZEFAA/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE  
RHMCSSU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NAIROBI 001655

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/30/2019

TAGS: PGOV PREL PTER MOPS SO

SUBJECT: SOMALIA - ANTI-SHABAAB FORCES IN BELEDWEYNE  
WORKING TO CONSOLIDATE GAINS; CLAN TENSIONS PERSIST

REF: NAIROBI 1565

Classified By: Somalia Unit Counselor Bob Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

¶1. (C) Summary: TFG-aligned forces on July 26 managed to take control of much of Beledweyne town in Hiraan region, most likely as a result of Hawadle clan mobilization, Ethiopian support, and tacit support from rival subclans. Police General Mukhtar Hussein Afrah (Hawiye/Hawadle) led a successful push into Beledweyne's western half on July 26, where Islamists reportedly had held sway. Our contacts tell us the TFG believes TFG-aligned forces from the Hawiye/Hawadle clan will likely retain possession of Beledweyne, thanks to productive consultations with hostile Hawiye/Galjaal clan elders before the fighting began. Ethiopia reportedly assisted the offensive with ammunition, but by mutual agreement has not provided more conspicuous assistance. Our contacts tell us many Hawadle leaders believe military and political revenge against Galjaal subclans which had supported al-Shabaab is necessary to exact justice as per Somali custom. We are encouraging TFG Minister of National Security "Sanbaloshi" (Hawadle) and other TFG officials to remain in close contact with leaders in Beledweyne and Hiraan region to ensure that the gains of July 26 are not reversed. We are also encouraging the TFG and Hawadle leaders to use their influence to prevent large-scale, clan-based retaliation that could re-energize extremists in the region. End summary.

¶2. (C) New TFG Minister of Security Abdulahi Ali "Sanbaloshi" on July 29 told us that he thought TFG-aligned forces could hold recent gains in and around Beledweyne, the regional capitol. (Note: "Sanbaloshi" replaces Security Minister Omar Hashi, who was killed in a suicide bombing in Beledweyne on June 18. End Note.) On July 26, TFG-allied Police General Mukhtar Hussein Afrah (Hawiye/Hawadle) led a successful push into Beledweyne's western half, where al-Shabaab and Hisbul Islam forces reportedly held sway. "Sanbaloshi" said that at the moment the TFG believed TFG-aligned forces can hold all of Beledweyne, thanks to productive consultations with hostile Hawiye/Galjaal clan elders before the fighting began.

Ethiopia assisted the offensive with ammunition, but by mutual agreement had not provided more conspicuous assistance, "Sanbaloshi" told us. (Note: "Sanbaloshi," who is very close to the GoE, accepts the possible poison pill of Ethiopian assistance because "no one else in the region is coming through" with materiel and money. Somalia Unit cannot confirm media reports that Ethiopian troops were directly involved in the takeover of Beledweyne. End Note.)

¶3. (C) Mohamed Abdi Ware, a Hawadle leader close to "Sanbaloshi," on July 29 told us that TFG-aligned forces were successful on July 26, in part, because most Galjaal subclans had become increasingly distrustful of al-Shabaab militia after the July 18 suicide bombing that killed Omar Hashi. Ware said al-Shabaab had originally been able to gain a foothold in western Beledweyne by playing on Galjaal resentment. (Note: The Hawadle reside predominantly on the eastern side of Beledweyne and dominate the city's business and agriculture sectors. End Note.) Ware told Somalia Unit that Hawadle leaders had learned, during meetings with Galjaal elders, that most Galjaal subclans had found it unacceptable that many civilians were killed during the suicide bombing. Ware said most Galjaal subclans on July 26 exhibited tacit support by not fleeing, as they have in the past, as Hawadle-dominated forces entered the western side of the city. However, Ware said, because the Galjaal/Absame were believed to have provided the tacit support to Hisbul Islam and al-Shabaab, many Hawadle leaders in Beledweyne were now calling for revenge against the Galjaal/Absame, Ware said.

¶4. (C) Our contacts tell us that Hawadle leaders in Beledweyne are attempting to consolidate gains by establishing a local administration aligned with the TFG, but leaders remain at odds over the appropriate treatment for the Galjaal/Absame. Some Hawadle leaders tell us they are attempting to apply lessons learned and realize that an administration that completely sidelines the Galjaal, and the Absame in particular, is likely to fuel precisely the kind of resentment that had earlier allowed al-Shabaab to take

NAIROBI 00001655 002 OF 002

advantage of subclan grievances in the region. Our contacts tell us, however, that a majority of Hawadle leaders currently believe that military and political revenge against the Galjaal/Absame is necessary to bring about justice as per Somali custom.

Comment

-----

¶5. (C) The gains made by TFG-aligned forces in Beledweyne illustrate how the assassination of Omar Hashi and other Hawadle elders, as well as women and children, continues to resonate in Hiraan region. We are encouraging "Sanbaloshi" and other TFG officials to ensure that the gains of July 26 are not squandered in revenge against the Galjaal-Hawadle. Some degree of Galjaal-Hawadle violence is, however, likely in the coming days or weeks and we accordingly caution against understanding Somali conflicts only in terms of extremists versus the TFG.

RANNEBERGER